

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An image output processor for receiving data transmitted from a plurality of data processors connected to the image output processor and for outputting the data to a printer having a plurality of sorter bins, the image output processor comprising:

data transmission source identifying means for uniquely identifying one of the data processors as a data transmission source of data received by the image output processor, wherein the data transmission source identifying means supports a plurality of communication protocols and executes different types of processes for identifying the data transmission source based on the communication protocol used to transmit the data from the plurality of data processors; and

sorter bin determining means for determining to which sorter bin to output the data received from the plurality of data processors based on the data transmission source identified by the data transmission source identifying means.

2. (Currently Amended) An image output processor for receiving data transmitted from a plurality of data processors connected to the image output processor and for outputting the data to a printer having a plurality of sorter bins, the image output processor comprising:

data transmission source identifying means for identifying a transmission source of data transmitted from the data processors, wherein the data transmission source identifying means

supports a plurality of communication protocols and executes different types of processes for identifying the transmission source based on the communication protocol used to transmit the data from the plurality of data processors; and

sorter bin determining means for determining to which sorter bin to output the data received from the plurality of data processors based on the data transmission source identified by the data transmission source identifying means, wherein the image output processor and the plurality of data processors are connected via a network.

3. (Original) An image output processor as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the image output processor and the plurality of data processors are connected via dedicated data communication channels.

4. (Currently Amended) An image output processor for receiving data transmitted from a plurality of data processors connected to the image output processor and for outputting the data to a printer having a plurality of sorter bins, the image output processor comprising:

data transmission source identifying means for identifying a transmission source of data transmitted from the data processors; and

sorter bin determining means for determining to which sorter bin to output the data received from the plurality of data processors based on the data transmission source identified by the data transmission source identifying means, wherein the data transmission source identifying means identifies the source of data transmission by determining ~~[[the]]~~ a communication channel used to transmit the data from the plurality of data processors; and the sorter bin determining

means determines to which sorter bin to output data received from the plurality of data processors based on the communication channel identified by the data transmission source identifying means.

5. (Original) An image output processor as claimed in Claim 4, wherein the sorter bin determining means comprises a sorter bin determining table that associates communication channels connecting the data processors to the image output processor with the sorter bins in the printer; and the sorter bin determining means references the sorter bin determining table to determine to which sorter bin to output received data based on the communication channel identified by the data transmission source identifying means.

6. (Original) An image output processor as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the sorter bin determining means comprises a sorter bin determining table that associates the data processors connected to the image output processor with the sorter bins in the printer; and the sorter bin determining means references the sorter bin determining table to determine to which sorter bin to output received data based on the data processor identified as the data transmission source by the data transmission source identifying means.

7. (Original) An image output processor as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the sorter bin determining means comprises a sorter bin determining table that associates attribute data included with the data transmitted from the plurality of data processors with the sorter bins in the printer; and the sorter bin determining means references the sorter bin determining table to

determine to which sorter bin to output received data based on the attribute data identified by the data transmission source identifying means.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Original) An image output processor as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the sorter bin determining means executes a process for determining an appropriate printer to use in the output process.

10. (Original) An image output processor as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the data processors are medical diagnostic imaging devices.

11. (Currently Amended) An image output processing method for receiving data transmitted from a plurality of data processors connected to ~~[[the]]~~ an image output processor and outputting the data to a printer having a plurality of sorter bins, the image output processing method comprising the steps of:

uniquely identifying one of the data processors as a data transmission source of data received by the image output processor according to a communication protocol utilized to transmit the data, wherein the data processors transmit the data to the image output processor using a plurality of different communication protocols; and

determining to which sorter bin to output the data received from the plurality of data processors based on the data transmission source which has been identified.

12. (Original) An image output processing method as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the step for determining to which sorter bin to output the data comprises referencing a sorter bin determining table that associates data processors connected to the image output processor with sorter bins in the printer, according to the data processor identified as the data transmission source in the step for identifying the data transmission source.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) An image output processor for receiving image data transmitted from a plurality of data processors connected to the image output processor and for outputting the image data to a printer having a plurality of sorter bins, the image output processor comprising:

data transmission source identifying means for uniquely identifying one of the data processors as a data transmission source of image data received by the image output processor
~~The image output processor as claimed in claim 1, wherein data transmission source identifying means uniquely identifies one of the data processors as the data transmission source of the data received by the image output processor by extracting originating device data from [[tag]] data transmitted~~ received by the image output processor prior to the image data received by the image output processor; and

sorter bin determining means for determining which sorter bin to output the image data received from the plurality of data processors based on the data transmission source identified by the data transmission source identifying means.

16. (Currently Amended) ~~The image output processing method as claimed in claim 11, wherein the step of uniquely identifying one of the data processors as the data transmission source comprises~~ An image output processing method for receiving image data transmitted from a plurality of data processors connected to an image output processor and outputting the image data to a printer having a plurality of sorter bins, the image output processing method comprising the steps of:

uniquely identifying one of the data processors as a data transmission source of image data received by the image output processor by extracting originating device data from [[tag]] data transmitted received by the image output processor prior to the image data and uniquely identifying one of the data processors as the data transmission source based on the originating device data received by the image output processor; and

determining which sorter bin to output the image data received from the plurality of data processors based on the data transmission source which has been identified.

17. (Currently Amended) An image output processor for receiving image data transmitted from a plurality of data processors connected to the image output processor and for outputting the image data to at least one printer having a plurality of sorter bins, the image output processor comprising:

attribute data and data transmission source identifying means for identifying attribute data for selecting a sorter bin if the attribute data is received with the image data, and uniquely identifying a particular data processor among the data processors as a data transmission source of the image data if the attribute data is not received with the image data, wherein the attribute data and data transmission source identifying means identifies the attribute data or the particular data processor according to a communication protocol utilized to transmit the image data, and the data processors transmit the image data to the image output processor using a plurality of different communication protocols; and

sorter bin determining means for determining to which sorter bin to output the image data received from the plurality of data processors based on the attribute data or the particular data processor identified as the data transmission source ~~by the attribute data~~ and data transmission source identifying means.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) The image output processor as claimed in claim ~~[[18]]~~ 17, wherein the attribute data comprises at least one patient identification information and physician identification information.

20. (Currently Amended) An image output processing method for receiving image data transmitted from a plurality of data processors connected to the image output processor and

outputting the image data to at least one printer having a plurality of sorter bins, the image output processing method comprising the steps of:

identifying attribute data for selecting a sorter bin if the attribute data is received with the image data, and uniquely identifying a particular data processor among the data processors as a data transmission source of the image data if the attribute data is not received with the image data, wherein the attribute data or the particular data processor is identified according to a communication protocol utilized to transmit the image data, and the data processors transmit the image data to the image output processor using a plurality of different communication protocols;
and

determining a particular sorter bin among the plurality of sorter bins to receive a printed image corresponding to the image data based on the attribute data or the particular data processor which has been identified.

21. (Canceled)

22. (Previously Presented) The image output processing method as claimed in claim 20, wherein the attribute data comprises at least one patient identification information and physician identification information.